



EMMA HEMING WILLIS: AUTHOR TALK

Discussion Questions for *An Unexpected Journey*

1. “The Book I Wish Someone Had Put in My Hands”

Emma describes leaving the diagnosis appointment with “no support, no hope, no roadmap.” What kinds of resources or support do you think families should receive immediately after a life-changing diagnosis?

2. Asking for Help

Emma talks about how hard it was to reach out and how caregivers often feel isolated and that asking for help shows failure. Why do you think asking for help is so difficult for caregivers? What has helped you—or someone you know—overcome that barrier?

3. The Hidden Toll of Caregiving

The neurologist told Emma that caregivers have a high risk of serious health decline and even early death. In what ways do you feel that communities, including the library, better support caregivers’ physical and emotional health?

4. Building a “Village”

Emma emphasizes the importance of experts, specialists, family, and community as part of her “village.” Who or what has been part of your caregiving village? Where have you found support that surprised you?

5. The Power of Community

Emma says the most transformative part of her caregiving journey was connecting with other caregivers. In what ways does sharing our stories reduce isolation? How can libraries create or strengthen spaces for caregiver community?

6. Guardrails and Boundaries

Emma discusses the need to establish boundaries with well-intentioned friends and family. What kinds of boundaries are useful for caregivers to set? How can friends support without overstepping?

7. The Emotional Landscape of Caregiving

She talks openly about experiencing anger, resentment, grief, and guilt—and the relief of having those feelings validated. Why is it important to acknowledge difficult emotions? What helps make that emotional honesty feel safe?

8. Cracks of Light

Despite the hardships, Emma speaks about finding “cracks of light” through connection, understanding, and shared humanity. Where do you find moments of light, hope, or meaning during challenging times?

9. Self-Care as Care

Emma notes that when caregivers care for themselves, it improves the well-being of the person they support. What forms of self-care feel realistic or accessible for caregivers? What small practices make a real difference?

10. Using Resources Creatively

Emma highlights the value of audiobooks, online support groups, and free tools like YouTube trainings. What resources, tools, or formats (books, audio, online groups, library programs) have been most helpful or accessible to you or someone you know?



ELIZABETH STROUT: AUTHOR TALK

Discussion Questions for *Tell Me Everything*

1. Everyday Caregiving

Bob is described as a “sin eater,” someone who quietly absorbs the burdens of others. How does this reflect the kind of invisible caregiving many of us provide in our own families or communities?

2. Listening as Care

Elizabeth Strout notes how rare it is to be truly listened to. When have you felt genuinely heard by someone? How is deep listening a form of caregiving?

3. Caring Across Relationships

Lucy and Bob care for each other in a way that is deep, steady, and non-romantic. How do friendships sometimes become caregiving relationships? What kinds of care do friends provide that family may not?

4. Caregiver Fatigue and Boundaries

Bob becomes “slumpier” after each encounter with someone who needs him. Why is it so easy for caregivers—formal or informal—to become emotionally drained?

5. Supporting “Broken” People

Strout emphasizes that many characters are not evil, just broken. How does seeing people through a lens of empathy change how we care for them, especially when their trauma or behavior is difficult?

6. Unrecorded Caregiving

The novel highlights “unrecorded lives”—ordinary people whose stories are never written down. What kinds of caregiving go unnoticed or unacknowledged in everyday life? Why is it important to honor these forms of care?

7. Aging and Caregiving:

The book centers many older adults navigating loss, memory, and companionship.

How do caregiving needs evolve as people age, both for the caregiver and the person receiving care?

8. Love as a Care Practice:

Strout says love comes in many forms. How does caregiving express love? And how does being cared for teach us to receive love?

9. Community Care:

Strout shows how Crosby, Maine is held together by small acts of care. What does community care look like in your own life or neighborhood? Where do you see people supporting one another in quiet ways?



CHRIS DURRANCE: FILMMAKER TALK

Discussion Questions for *Caregiving*

1. Invisible Work, Invisible Workers

The filmmaker says caregiving is “the most important and invisible work” in America. Why do you think caregiving remains so undervalued, and how has that invisibility shown up in your own experiences or observations?

2. Care as a Public Good

The documentary argues that caregiving should be recognized as a public good rather than a private burden. What would change—for families, workplaces, and communities—if society treated care as a shared responsibility?

3. The Emotional Weight of Care

Many caregivers give baths, administer medications, or sit silently with a loved one—acts full of love but also emotional complexity. What emotional challenges stand out to you in caregiving, and what practices or support systems help people cope?

4. Resilience and the Human Spirit

The filmmaker calls caregivers “modern heroes” whose resilience is often unseen. What does resilience look like in caregiving, and where do you think caregivers draw strength from?

5. Historical Roots of Today’s Care Crisis

The interview describes how the separation of work and home, the rise of suburbs, and families spread across states have shaped today’s care challenges. How have changes in American family structure and mobility affected caregiving responsibilities, especially across generations?

6. Caregiving Across the Lifespan

The film covers many forms of care—from children with disabilities to aging parents to end-of-life care. In what ways is caregiving the same and in what ways is it different across life stages? Are there universal themes that connect these experiences?

7. The Economic Reality of Care

Caregiving comes with emotional and financial challenges. How does the cost of care—financial and personal—shape decisions families make? What kinds of economic policies or workplace changes would make a real difference?

8. Speaking Up and Sharing Stories

Chris Durrance urges caregivers to “speak up” because sharing stories creates community and drives change. Why might caregiving feel difficult to talk about openly, and how can conversations like this one help break the silence?